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TAGS: PGOV PREL EUN UN TU CY

SUBJECT: TURKISH CYPRIOTS STILL STEWING OVER PARIS
COMMUNIQUE

REF: A. NICOSIA 294

1B. NICOSIA 273

Classified By: Ambassador R. Schlicher, for reasons 1.4 (b) and (d).

¶1. (C) In a March 13 meeting with Ambassador Schlicher, "TRNC President" Talat's Under Secretary Rasit Pertev expressed continued bitterness over the joint communique issued after the Annan-Papadopoulos meeting in Paris on February 28 (ref a). Pertev stressed that both he and "President" Talat felt personally betrayed by UNFICYP Chief/SYG Special Representative Michael Moller, whom they blamed for the inclusion of a "catastrophic" reference to the settlement-related issues of Varosha and demilitarization.

¶2. (C) Pertev noted that the Turkish Cypriots had effectively frozen their contacts with the UN, partly because of their displeasure with Moller, and partly because Talat was not yet back to work after his March 12 return from coronary surgery in Turkey. While Pertev noted the SYG would "never lose our confidence," he suggested Moller had lost his personal credibility as an honest broker by allowing himself to be co-opted by the Greek Cypriots. Half in jest, he wondered if Moller was cozying up to the Papadopoulos administration in order to ensure his a pleasant, extended assignment on Cyprus.

¶3. (C) In a March 14 meeting with the Ambassador, Turkish Ambassador to the "TRNC" Aydan Karahan echoed these sentiments. Moller, who visited Turkey last week, had been asked by the GOT to provide clarification for the "problematic" references to Varosha and demilitarization in the communique. But Moller's explanation, said Karahan, "clarified nothing." Karahan hastened to add that the GOT fully supported the start of technical talks, however, as had been previously agreed by the Turkish Cypriot side. Acknowledging that the GOT and Turkish Cypriots were in "close contact," he reassured the Ambassador that Talat was nonetheless empowered to make his own decisions. Indeed, Karahan said, Talat had gone against Turkey's advice by not rejecting the EU's recently announced aid package outright (ref b), but that Ankara had not objected. Talat would have Ankara's support to engage in UN-brokered technical negotiations.

¶4. (C) Ambassador Schlicher stressed to both Pertev and Karahan that the Turks and Turkish Cypriots should not allow anger over SRSG Moller's perceived role in the Paris communique to become an albatross on potentially useful technical talks. Regardless of the spin the GOC has put on the Paris declaration, no item could be on the agenda of technical talks without the agreement of both sides. Rather than focusing on items of contention, the two sides should get down to business by discussing those topics that had already been agreed. The Ambassador also encouraged Pertev to move quickly on approving the UN's nominee for Third Member on the Committee on Missing Persons. The Ambassador

has encouraged both Moller and Pertev to meet with each other in the near future to clear the aid and find a way to start work in the technical committees. Moller reported that, as of today, Pertev is still refusing to take his calls.

¶5. (C) COMMENT: We will continue to press the Turkish Cypriots to overcome their anger at Moller and work with him to start technical talks on the list of agreed topics.

Intellectually, the Turkish Cypriots appear to understand that unwillingness to deal with Moller would only play into the hands of those who want to portray them as the intransigent party. At the same time, as they freely admit, the Turkish Cypriots are leading with their (bruised) emotions on this issue.

¶6. (C) Their relationship with UNFICYP will probably not change until Talat himself decides to swallow his anger and seek a modus vivendi with Moller. Assuming Talat does indeed have the backing of Ankara, he will probably do so eventually -- although his extended medical convalescence may mean that it will take additional time before the Turkish Cypriots engage fully with the UN's man here. Pertev has neither the political strength nor bureaucratic standing to solve a problem for which some quarters might assign him, as Moller's interlocutor pre-Paris, a measure of blame. We suggest that it would also be very useful to engage the GOT on this issue to help calm tensions and get the technical talks on track. If this problem is not overcome soon, the Turkish Cypriots and GOT run the risk of inheriting the mantle of intransigence from Papadopoulos and company. END COMMENT.

SCHLICHER